RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

LEAFLETS
of
POPULAR INFORMATION

No. 37 June, 1940

LONICERA LEDEBOURII
COAST TWINBERRY

Prepared
by
RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
of the
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Ana Canyon
Orange County
California

No. 37 June 28, 1940

LONICERA LEDEBOURII
COAST TWINBERRY

Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle Family

Deciduous shrub attaining a height of 6-12 ft., usually equally broad, the branches slender and wand-like. Leaves opposite, ovate 2-5 in. long, 1-2½ in. wide, abruptly attenuate, dark green above, somewhat lighter beneath and lightly hairy; petioles about ¼ in. long. Flowers borne on slender peduncles, these 1-2 in. long at flowering time but often 6 in. long later. Flowers 2 on each peduncle, subtended by 2 foliar, greenish to reddish, somewhat glandular-hairy, ovate bracts, ½-1½ in. long, and 2 more or less rounded, connate, ruffled, petal-like, glandular-hairy, bright red bracts, ½-1½ in. across. Corolla tubular, ½-¾ in. long, with a saccate base, rich orange-yellow to reddish tinged, the 5 lobes 1/8-3/16 in. long, nearly equal, erect to slightly spreading. Stamens 5, inserted about ½ way down the corolla tube, anthers rising to about the base of the lobes. Calyx small, of 5 unequal lobes borne on summit of the corolla lobes, its stigma a green, peltate disc. Fruit nearly spherical, about 3/8 in. long, lustrous black, filled with a greenish, juicy bitter pulp and about 15 shiny, very dark brown seeds.

The genus Lonicera (name in honor of Adam Lonitzer, a German Physician and Naturalist, 1528-1586) contains over 175 species widely distributed in the northern hemisphere. They are mainly deciduous shrubs and climbers, of which over half have been introduced into cultivation. Eleven kinds are native to California where they are found from the coast to the high mountains but not on the deserts.

Lonicera Ledebourii (the specific name honors Karl F. Ledebour, a Russian) was discovered at San Francisco in 1816 by Chamisso and Eschscholtz, scientists on a Russian voyage of exploration, and was published by the latter in the Memoirs of the Academy of St. Petersburg in 1826. In 1863, Kellogg proposed the name L. intermedia for what appears to be the same plant. Some botanists consider that L. Ledebourii is nothing more than a coastal variety of the montane L. involucrata, but the latter is a much smaller plant, has nearly glabrous leaves and somewhat differently shaped and colored flowers with exserted stamens. L. Ledebourii is found along the coast from Santa Barbara Co. to southern Oregon, where it inhabits moist ravines and slopes. The plants are especially abundant north of San Francisco and enhance the landscape with their flowers from April

to July and their fruits from June until September.

The name Twinberry or Black Twinberry is applied to L. involucrata as well as to this species, so we suggest that it be called Coast Twinberry if an English name must be used.

Although Lonicera Ledebourii was cultivated as early as 1838, it is still practically unknown in California gardens. Its clean green foliage makes an attractive setting for the rich yellow flowers and black fruits set in the brilliant red bracts. Vigorous shoots will frequently bear flowers and fruits along 2-3 ft. of their length. The plant retains its leaves until late fall, but does not leaf out until about March. It should be planted where ample water can be applied, but it is not particular as to soil or exposure, although in southern California it does better with a little shade. Borders of pools or ponds are ideal spots for this shrub. Greatest profusion of flowers and fruits is produced on young vigorous shoots, so pruning operations should consist of removing the older branches to ground level. By this method the tops can be maintained with growth from 1-3 years of age and the plant can be kept as a rounded mound 4 to 8 feet high.

Propagation of Lonicera Ledebourii is readily accomplished by seeds planted in the fall or spring in beds or flats and later placed in containers or field rows. Cuttings of mature wood taken in February will root readily when placed in sand. These can then be placed in containers or in the ground where they will make a growth of 1-2 ft. the first season. Old clumps may also be divided when the plants are dormant. By any of these methods of propagation and proper culture the plants should produce flowers and fruits the second season, after which they can be expected to live for many years.

Our strain of this species was obtained in 1929 from seed collected near Eureka, Humboldt Co. The original planting in the Garden consisted of 58 plants set out in 1930, but is now an almost impenetrable thicket in which the limits of any one plant are not easily determined.

The wand-like flowering and fruiting shoots of Lonicera Ledebourii make excellent bouquets which will last for a week. Shoots of from 1-5 ft. in length may be cut, thus allowing a wide range in size and type of bouquet.

At the present time plants of the Coast Twinberry are probably only obtainable from dealers in California native plants.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

Of The Native Plants of California.

Established 1927

In Memory of John W. Bixby

- o O o -

Purpose: A scientific institution devoted to the growth and study of the native plants of California for their botanical, horticultural and popular features.

- o O o -

MAIL ADDRESS

R. F. D., Anaheim, California

- o O o -

Reissued without change of text, July, 1941